

## CLAIMS

1. A method of booting at least one target device in communication with a network, comprising:
- 5 requesting at least one boot file from a loading device in communication with the target device;
- executing, at the target device, a boot delay response so that the target device does not time out; and
- receiving, at the target device, the boot file after the boot delay
- 10 response is received.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the boot file is selected from the group consisting of:
- a bootstrap program, a configuration file, a boot parameters file,
- 15 and an operating system file.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
- evaluating whether a boot delay response should be used based on a state of network congestion.
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4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
- executing the boot delay response repeatedly.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the loading device is a server in
- 25 communication with the target device.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the loading device is a client device with a loading program in communication with the target device.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one target device is a plurality of target devices.

5           8. The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
            delaying at least one request for the boot file from the target device  
as the boot delay response.

            9. The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
10           delaying at least one response from the loading device as the boot  
delay response, the response comprising the at least one boot file.

            10. The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
            altering boot parameters on the target device based on the boot  
15    delay response.

            11. The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
            altering boot parameters on the loading device based on the boot  
delay response.

20           12. The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
            rebooting the target device after a timeout value has expired as the  
boot delay response.

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13. Computer program product in a computer usable medium for providing at least one boot file to at least one target device, comprising:

- 5 means for requesting the at least one boot file from a loading device in communication with the target device;
- means for executing, at the target device, a boot delay response so that the target device does not time out; and
- means for receiving, at the target device, the at least one boot file after the boot delay response is received.

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14. The program of claim 13 further comprising:

means for evaluating whether a boot delay response should be used, based on a state of network congestion.

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15. The program of claim 13 further comprising:

means for executing the boot delay response repeatedly.

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16. The program of claim 13 further comprising:

means for delaying at least one request for the boot file from the target device as the boot delay response.

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17. The program of claim 13 further comprising:

means for delaying at least one response from the loading device as the boot delay response, the response comprising the at least one boot file.

18. The program of claim 13 further comprising:

means for altering boot parameters on the target device based on the boot delay response.

19. The program of claim 13 further comprising:  
means for altering boot parameters on the loading device based on  
the boot delay response.

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20. The program of claim 13 further comprising:  
means for rebooting the target device after a timeout value has  
expired as the boot delay response.

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21. A data processing system, comprising:  
means for requesting at least one boot file from a loading device in  
communication with the target device;  
means for executing, at the target device, a boot delay response so  
that the target device does not time out; and

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means for receiving, at the target device, the boot file after the boot  
delay response is received.

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22. The system of claim 21 further comprising:  
means for evaluating whether a boot delay response should be  
used based on a state of network congestion.

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23. The system of claim 21 further comprising:  
means for executing the boot delay response repeatedly.

24. The system of claim 21 further comprising:  
means for delaying at least one request for the boot file from the  
target device as the boot delay response.

25. The system of claim 21 further comprising:  
means for delaying at least one response from the loading device  
as the boot delay response, the response comprising at least one boot file.

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26. The system of claim 21 further comprising:  
means for altering boot parameters on the target device based on  
the boot delay response.

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27. The system of claim 21 further comprising:  
means for altering boot parameters on the loading device based on  
the boot delay response.

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28. The system of claim 21 further comprising:  
means for rebooting the target device after a timeout value has  
expired as the boot delay response.

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